

# Highways of Statewide Significance

**Paula J. Hammond, P.E.**  
Secretary

**David L. Dye**  
Deputy Secretary

**Steve Reinmuth**  
Chief of Staff

**Elizabeth Robbins**, Manager  
Transportation Planning Office

**Brian J. Smith**, Director  
Strategic Planning and Programming

**Washington State Transportation Commission**  
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# Agenda

- History of the designation
- Currently designated highways
- Updated designation underway

# History Of The Designation

- 1991 Growth Management Act (GMA) amendments:  
State agencies shall comply with local comprehensive plans...
- The question:  
How could 281 cities and 39 counties separately plan for the state highway system?
- 1993 enactment of the Statewide Transportation Planning statute (RCW 47.06):  
Conflict with GMA was not resolved.

# The 1993 Level of Service Study

- During the 1993 interim, the Legislature studied the relationship between state transportation planning and local GMA plans.
- Key recommendations:
  - Designate certain statewide transportation routes to be of statewide significance.
- Clarify the state has the lead role for planning for statewide significant transportation.
- Identify a stronger RTPO role for planning other state highways.
- Keep status quo for state funding of statewide significant routes, but explore different funding options for regional routes.

# 1998 Legislature - “Level of Service” bill

- Declares certain types of highways and other transportation facilities as of “statewide significance.”
- Establishes the State is the lead for planning these, and sets higher priority for state mobility improvement funding.
- Amends GMA to require locals to:
  - Ensure local plans are consistent with state transportation plans.
  - Not preclude the siting of HSS and other statewide significant transportation facilities.
  - Exempt highways of statewide significance from concurrency (local request) except for counties consisting entirely of islands.
  - Requires local governments to estimate the impacts of their land use assumptions on state-owned transportation facilities.

# Milestones

- 1998: Washington Transportation Commission (WTC) designated specific routes as highways of statewide significance using legislative criteria.
- 1999: Legislature passed House Joint Memorial (HJM) 4006 confirming WTC 1999 recommendations and requesting the Commission to update the HSS system at least every five years.
- 2004: Update conducted making minor changes.
- 2006: Legislature shifted authority to recommend HSS changes from WTC to WSDOT; Legislature may also designate HSS routes.
- 2007: SSB 5412 removed language requiring higher priority of HSS segments for mobility improvement funding.

# Implications of Designation

- State sets level-of-service standard on HSS (RCW 47.06.140(2)) (RTPO and WSDOT together set LOS standard on non-HSS state highways).
- HSS are exempt from local transportation concurrency requirements, except for counties consisting entirely of islands.
- HSS are transportation facilities and services of statewide significance and essential public facilities (RCW 36.70A.210) – local jurisdiction comprehensive plans may not preclude siting.
- HSS are still a focus for funding by a Regional Transportation Investment District (RTID).
- HSS may receive priority funding in Transportation Benefit Districts (RCW 36.73) (passed as SSB 5177 in 2005).

# Capital Investments on the HSS

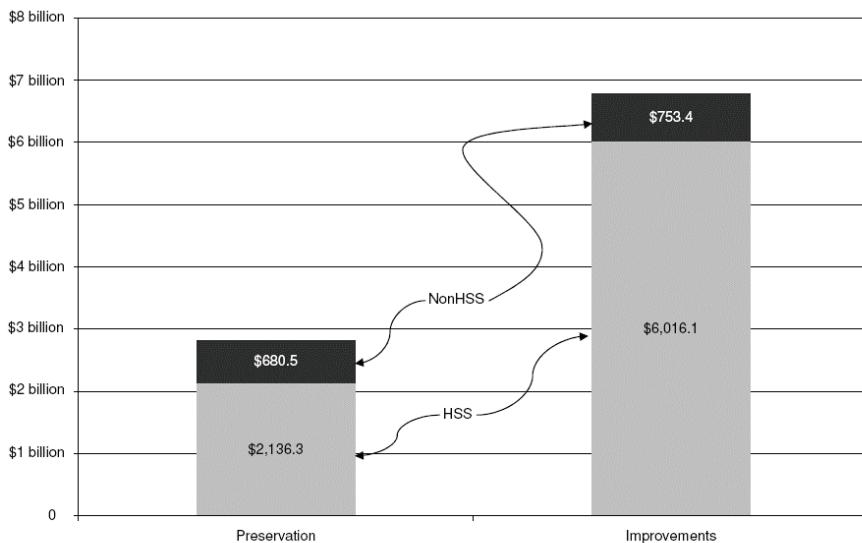
## Historic and Planned Investments 1999-2009

HSS account for:

- Over 75% of preservation expenditures.
- Almost 90% of improvement expenditures.

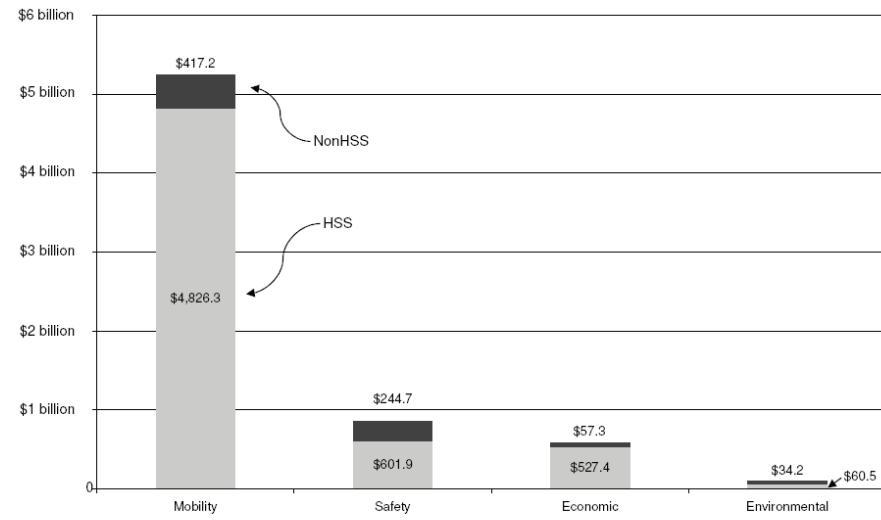
Conclusion: HSS designation has made a difference.

Highway Capital Investments on Highways Statewide Significance (HSS) vs NonHSS SFY 1999-2009



Source: WSDOT Highway System Analysis Branch - August 2008

Highway Capital Improvements Highways of Statewide Significance (HSS) vs NonHSS Highway Improvements by Subprogram (SFY 1999-2009)



Source: WSDOT Highway System Analysis Branch - August 2008

# Where Do We Stand Now?

As of 2008 the designation includes:

- 52% state highway centerline miles.
- 99% of the rural principal arterial system.
- Three rural minor arterials.
- 69% of state urban principal arterials.
- 80% of travel on state highways .
- 46% of all roadway travel.
- All HSS are either interstates or principal arterials, except SR 20, a section of SR 169 between Enumclaw and Renton, and a small section of US 97 near Wapato.

# **Designation Update Underway**

In keeping with the update cycle, WSDOT is under way, with the Regional Transportation Planning Organizations, with a review of possible changes to the designation.

# What Are The Designation Criteria?

Some were set by the Legislature (RCW 47.06.140 and 47.05.021(3)):

- All Interstate highways.
- Interregional principal arterials including ferry connections that:
  - Serve statewide travel.
  - Connect major communities across the state.
  - Support the state's economy.

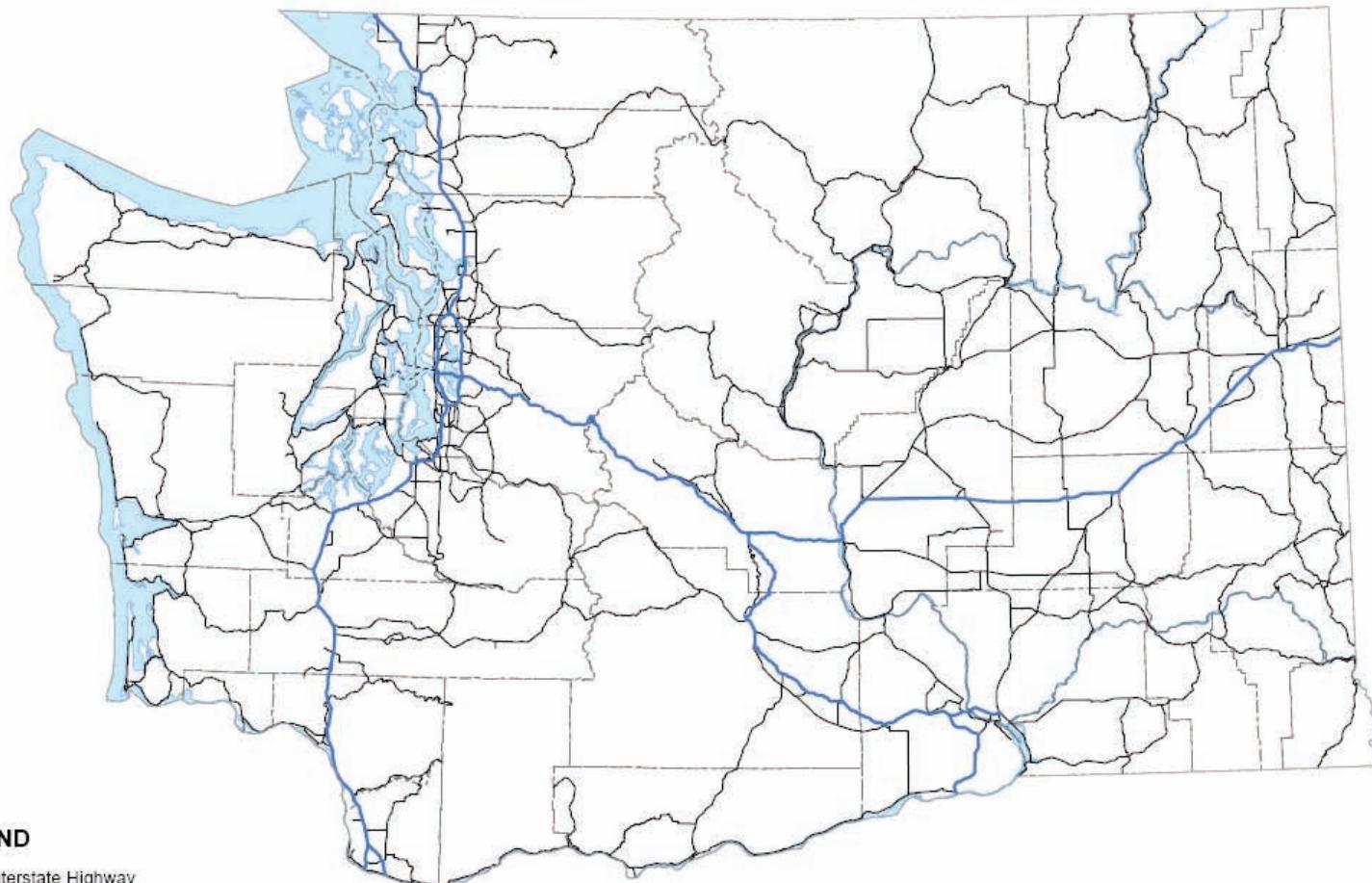
# Further Legislative Recommendations

Discussions with the Legislative Transportation Committee in 2003 further refined the legislative criteria to include:

- Connects major communities across the state:
  - Urban areas over 50,000 people
  - County seats
- Supports the state's economy:
  - Strategic Freight Corridors
  - Ports and airports and rail connections
  - Major recreational attractions
  - Other designations such as NHS, Scenic Byways
- Connections that serve statewide travel:
  - Traffic volumes and travel data (origin/destination, where available)
  - Nature of travel (cross-state should be HSS, commuting should be Non-HSS)
  - Level of Limited Access

# The Interstate: The Backbone of the System

Highways of Statewide Statewide Significance  
INTERSTATE  
2008



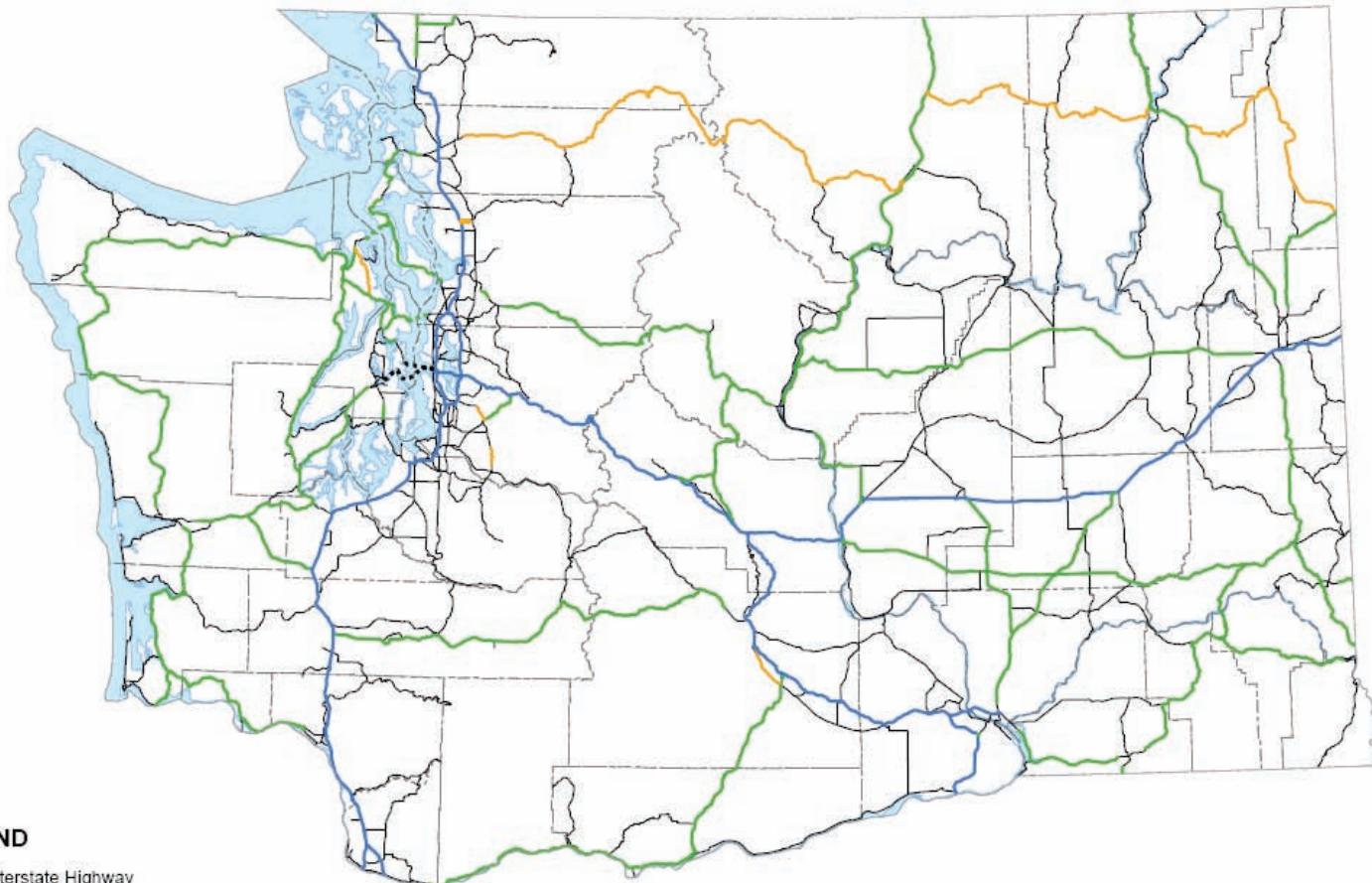
# Rural Principal Arterials:

Connecting communities across the state

## Highways of Statewide Statewide Significance

INTERSTATE AND RURAL PRINCIPAL ARTERIALS

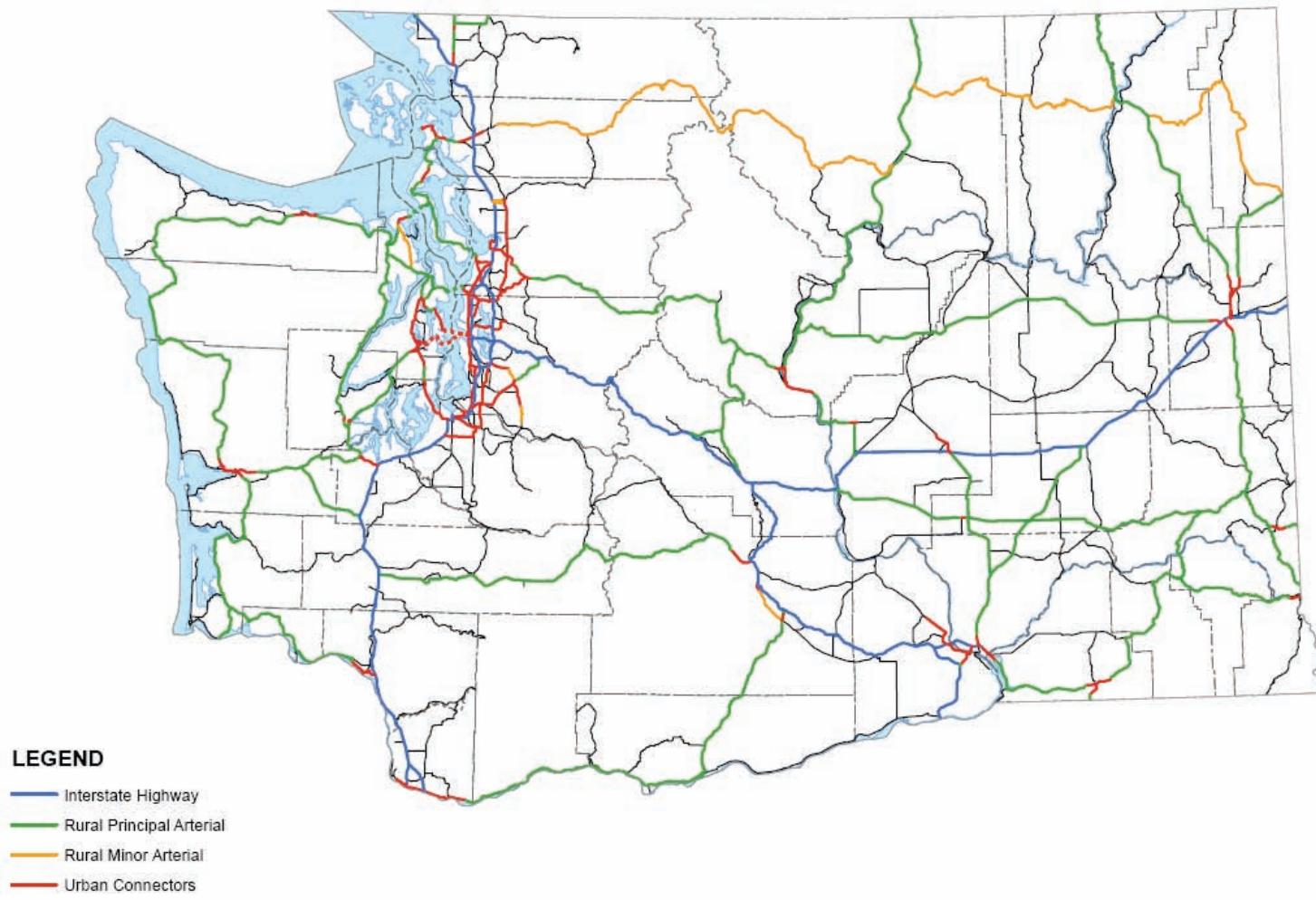
2008



# Urban Routes:

## Connecting the system through urban areas

**Highways of Statewide Statewide Significance**  
INTERSTATE, RURAL PRINCIPAL ARTERIALS, AND URBAN CONNECTORS  
2008



# What Has Been The 2008 Update Process?

- WSDOT provided the RTPOs the state criteria for HSS routes.
- WSDOT solicited nominations from RTPOs using legislative criteria.
- RTPOs submitted nominations with documentation on how the nominated highways meet the criteria.
- WSDOT is reviewing the current system and nominations, and will make recommendations to the Secretary.

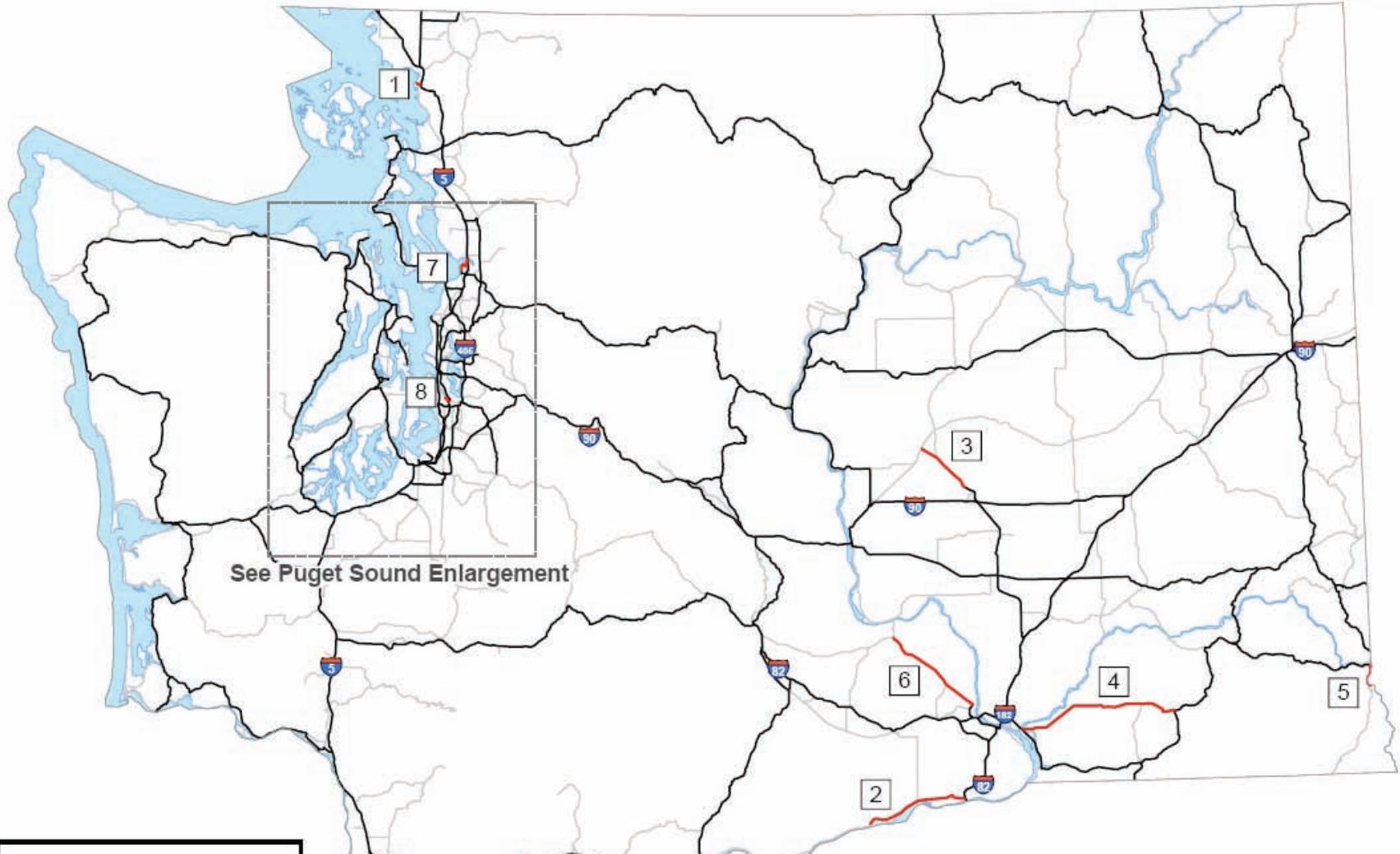
# Routes Nominated For The HSS In This Update

1. SR 11 in Whatcom County
2. SR 14 in Benton County
3. SR 17 /SR 282 in Grant County
4. SR 124 in Walla Walla County
5. SR 129 in Asotin County
6. SR 240 in Benton County
7. SR 529 in Snohomish County (City of Everett)
8. SR 599 in King County (City of Tukwila)

(Numbers are map keys)

# Highways of Statewide Significance

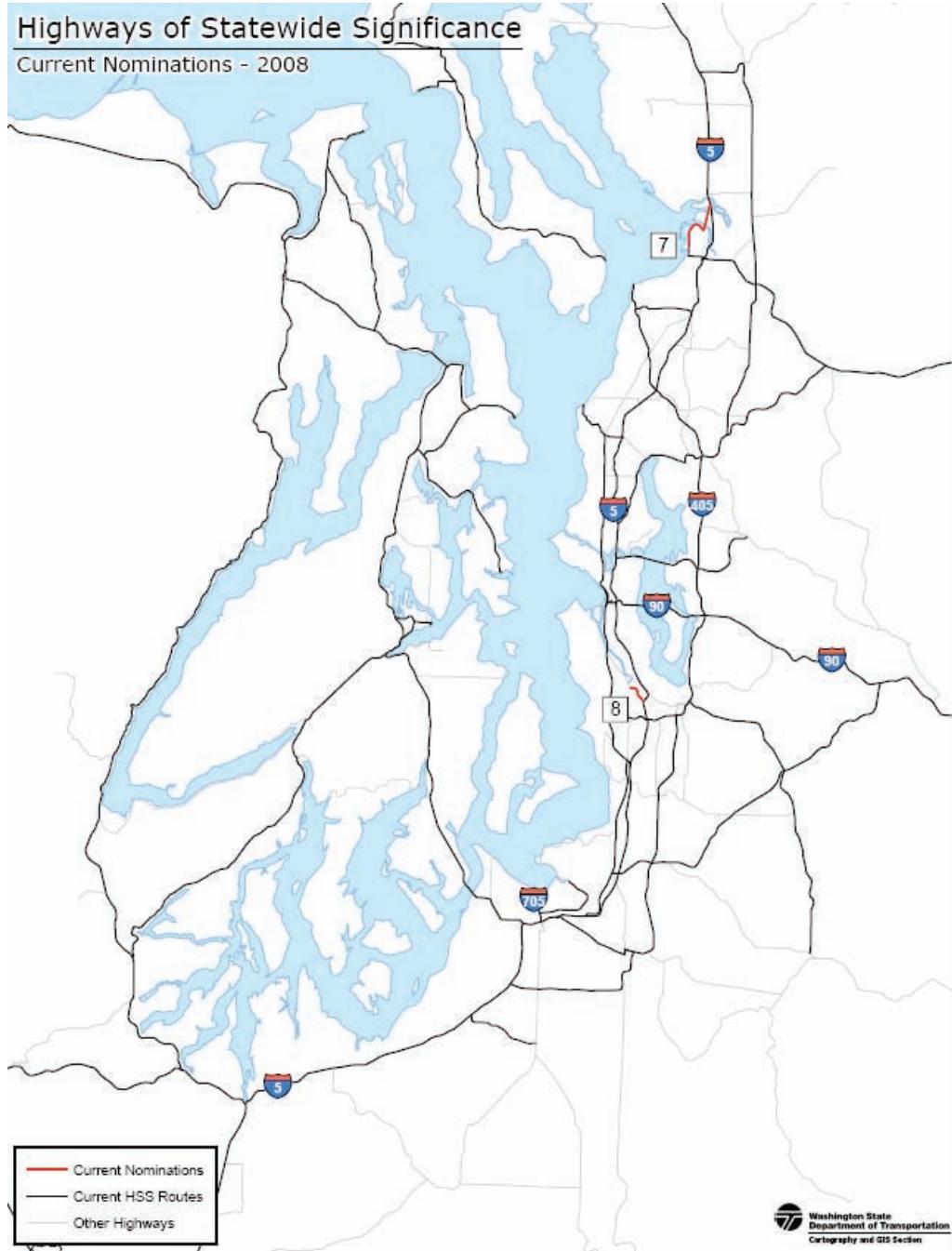
Current Nominations - 2008



- Current Nominations
- Current HSS Routes
- Other Highways



Washington State  
Department of Transportation  
Cartography and GIS Section



# Review of Nominations

For each of the eight nominations, WSDOT researched:

- Function - interstate, principal arterial, other function.
- “Connects major communities across the state”:
  - Urban areas over 50,000 people
  - County seats
- “Supports the state’s economy”:
  - Strategic Freight Corridors
  - Ports and airports and rail connections
  - Major recreational attractions
  - Other designations such as NHS, Scenic Byways
- “Connections that serve statewide travel”:
  - Traffic volumes and travel data (origin/destination, where available)
  - Nature of travel (cross-state, commuting)
  - Level of Limited Access

# Review of Nominations

Preliminary recommendation of the following nominations for designation as HSS:

- SR 11 (from Alaska ferry terminal to junction with I-5).
- SR 529 (from Port of Everett to junction with I-5).
- SR 599 (from start at Boeing Field to junction with I-5).

These are all principal arterials that provide some logical connection to the current HSS for ports, airports, or freight destinations.

These segments have characteristics comparable to currently designated highways.

# Review of Nominations

Preliminary recommendation that the following nominations not be designated:

- SR 14 (from junction with I-82 to Benton County Line).
- SR 17 / SR 282 (from Grant County International Airport to Ephrata).
- SR 124 (from US 12 Tri-cities to US 12 in Waitsburg).
- SR 129 (from junction with SR 12 to Asotin).
- SR 240 (from junction with SR 24 to Stevens Drive in Richland).

These five segments:

- Have low traffic volumes compared to currently designated highways.
- Are not entirely principal arterials.
- Are not part of the Strategic Freight System.

**Highways of Statewide Significance**  
**2008 Update**  
**Analysis of RTPO Nominations**

1 Map Key	2 Route	3 Length	4 Description	5 AADT	Statewide or Interregional Travel		Role in State Economy				11 Composite rating	12 Recommend for addition
					6 Principal Arterial or Interstate	7 Logical Connections	8 Limited Access	9 Strategic Freight Corridor	10 Major airport, port, rail, business			
1 SR 11	SR 11	1.4	I-5 to 12th Street and Fairhaven (Ferry / Amtrak Terminal)	15,800	●	●	○	○	●	2.5	Yes	LEGEND  ○ no or minimal ◐ partial or moderate ● yes or strong
2 SR 14	SR 14	28.44	From I-82 to Benton County Line	2,700	○	○	○	○	○	0.0	No	
3 SR 17 / SR 282	SR 17 / SR 282	16	From Grant County International Airport to Ephrata	4,500	○	●	◐	○	○	1.5	No	
4 SR 124	SR 124	44.98	From US 12 Tri-Cities to US 12 Waitsburg	2,200	◐	○	○	○	○	0.5	No	
5 SR 129	SR 129	6.85	US 12 to Asotin City Limits	5,500	○	●	○	○	●	2.0	No	
6 SR 240	SR 240	30.63	Horn Rapids to Stevens Drive	3,800	◐	○	◐	○	○	1.0	No	
7 SR 529	SR 529	3.59	From Port of Everett north to I-5	26,700	●	◐	○	◐	●	3.0	Yes	
8 SR 599	SR 599	1.75	From SR 99 to I-5	40,700	●	◐	●	●	◐	4.0	Yes	

# Conclusion of Nomination Review

Preliminary recommendation that the following be designated as Highways of Statewide Significance.

- SR 11 (from Alaska ferry terminal to junction with I-5).
- SR 529 (from Port of Everett to junction with I-5).
- SR 599 (from start at Boeing Field to junction with I-5).

# Questions?

For more information on  
Highways of Statewide Significance,  
please contact:

Elizabeth Robbins  
(360) 705-7371, or [RobbinS@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:RobbinS@wsdot.wa.gov),  
or visit  
<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/planning/HSS/Default.htm>



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